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Approved For Release 2002/01/30 : CIA-RDP79S01057

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21 July 1953

Noted by DCI
13 Aug 53
J. J. [unclear]

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Plans)

SUBJECT : Functions of the Operations Coordinating Board

REFERENCES : a. Proposed Executive Order Establishing the Operations Coordinating Board
b. Proposed Presidential Memorandum for Executive Secretary of the National Security Council Assigning Functions to the Operations Coordinating Board
c. Letter dtd 18 Jul 53 to Bureau of the Budget from DCI Commenting on References a and b

29
DOCUMENT NO. [unclear]
CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐
DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
NEXT REVIEW DATE: [unclear]
JTH: HIR 10-2
ATE: 4-76-80
REVIEWER: 372044

1. In the Director's letter of 18 July to the Bureau of the Budget (Reference c), beginning with the second paragraph on page 2, he set forth the Agency's views concerning revisions of the proposed Presidential memorandum to the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council (Reference b). While the desired revisions are accurately set forth in the letter, there is a considerable amount of background to this subject which was not deemed appropriate for inclusion in the letter but which should be a matter of record to avoid confusion in our concept of how the Operations Coordinating Board should operate.

2. I believe we were all in agreement that the purpose of our comments was to help establish the Operations Coordinating Board so that from its start it could operate effectively in giving the high-level yet detailed policy guidance so badly needed for proper conduct of the clandestine operations of this Agency. Prior experience with the Psychological Strategy Board showed that it tended to bog down in the details of operations and the manner in which they were conducted, thus rendering ineffectual its attempts to render effective policy guidance. This situation appears to have arisen primarily as a result of the requirements of paragraphs 2 and 3 of NSC 10/5. Consequently, our recommendation for rescission of these paragraphs is designed to aid the Operations Coordinating Board in sloughing off the duty to review operational detail and feasibility.

3. Prior to the creation of the Psychological Strategy Board, however, there was no place to turn to, except the National Security Council, for high-level policy guidance in the event of disagreement

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on or lack of policy. But the National Security Council functions in a sphere so far removed from the specific policy problems of individual clandestine operations that only the broadest aspects of such operations should properly be placed before it. NSC 10/2 contemplated this problem but did not, in effect, resolve it satisfactorily. Paragraph 3d(1) of NSC 10/2 put on the Central Intelligence Agency the responsibility of seeing that proposed clandestine operations did not have effects running counter to political policy of the Department of State and military policy of the Department of Defense. In the event of disagreement, a policy question was to be referred to the National Security Council. This led to the creation of the Consultants Group referred to in the proposed Presidential memorandum for the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council (Reference b), but, again, this Consultants Group was not completely effective particularly in those areas where there was more or less of a void in national policy or in cases where policy disagreements needed resolving below the level of the National Security Council.

4. In his letter the Director recommended that instead of transferring the functions of the Consultants Group to the Operations Coordinating Board the President should transfer to the Operations Coordinating Board the policy coordination functions contemplated by paragraph 3d(1) of NSC 10/2. It was our intention that this would enable the Operations Coordinating Board to overcome the deficiencies of the Consultants Group without, at the same time, hampering the Operations Coordinating Board with the shortcomings of the Psychological Strategy Board. If our recommendations in the Director's letter to the Bureau of the Budget are properly implemented, I believe the Operations Coordinating Board could act effectively in those areas where there is doubt as to foreign policy or disagreement on the application of national policy and in other situations where this Agency so badly needs guidance. This would not, in any way, limit the normal liaison with the Department of State and the Department of Defense on those matters where adequate policy guidance can readily be obtained from the responsible officers.

/s/
LAWRENCE R. HOUSTON
General Counsel

cc: DD/I /
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